



NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 Issue 1

When I joined the 'Robot Wars' production team, I knew I was joining a huge enterprise - but nothing had quite prepared me for just how big the world of robotic combat had become.

From the start, 'Robot Wars' has captured the imagination of the nation. The first series was watched by an average of 4 million viewers. Now the ranks of loyal fans has swelled to a staggering 6 million.

And it's not just the number of viewers that have increased. Our current competitor database consists of over 1000 teams - and with a maximum of three people per team that's over 3000 dedicated roboteers with skills in electrical engineering, mechanics, construction, radio control modelling and in many cases an amazing flair for graphic design!

The standard of robots this year has been astounding. We received more than 900 applications and 'auditioned' over 350 robots for just 128 places in the main heavyweight knockout competition. Almost all of the teams who 'auditioned' could have taken part in the show, which goes to prove that as the sport grows the teams have risen to meet the challenge in many innovative ways.

'Robot Wars' has become one of the biggest and most complicated programmes made for television. The show is only possible thanks to the hard work of an incredibly creative production crew. They worked day and night to build and maintain the show's battle arena, successfully captured some of the most exciting robotic combat ever seen and occasionally put themselves at risk to bring you your favourite TV show - more on this later! At the recording of the show, I was particularly struck by the commitment and camaraderie of the competitors. Gallant in victory and charming in defeat, they personify what the programme is all about. One minute the teams are feverishly tinkering away, making final adjustments to their robots and the next they're offering to help an opponent, even if they're about to meet each other in the arena!

The 'Third Wars' has produced some of the most exciting battles to date. We've seen cunning and great feats of strength from the likes of 'Chaos II' and 'Behemoth', flair and showmanship from robots like 'Razer' and 'Sir Chromalot' and true sportsmanship from the likes of the boys from Belfast, the 'Diotior'. However the new series has also seen many of the favourites knocked out in their qualifying heats and a new generation of robots rolling into the limelight - 'Pitbull', 'Gravedigger' and the phenomenally destructive 'Hypnodisc' to name but a few.

Without the competitors, 'Robot Wars' would not be the huge success it is today. We are extremely grateful to every team for their hard work, commitment and understanding, particularly during the build up and recording of the most recent series.

Time and again I've been asked what I like best about Robot Wars. It's impossible to single out one thing, but the underlying spirit of the show has made it a pleasure to work on. It also gives you a sense of pride when you see someone sporting a jacket with the show's logo or proudly wearing their club badge. Your support is essential to us and to know that you

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For more information on anything mentioned in this newsletter please visit our website at
WWW.ROBOTWARS.CO.UK

ROBOT WARS HEADS FOR WORLD DOMINATION

The spectacle of 'Robot Wars' has already captured the imagination of the British public and now other countries want to get in on the act. To date America, Canada, South Africa, Belgium and Australia have screened episodes of the show. The ratings have been huge and the response from would-be roboteers even huger. As I write, negotiations are currently underway to introduce Robot Wars to Germany, Italy, Holland, Japan and New Zealand.

ROBOT WARS III IS NUMBER ONE IN YOUR BOOK

If the 'Second Wars' were popular, the 'Third Wars' have seen the audience go through the roof. The new series regularly attracts over 6 million viewers (average combined audience) and the show has been rated the number one programme on BBC2. A big thank-you to all of the competitors - and to all of our fans - for making the series so popular and successful. You'll be glad to know that an even bigger and better fourth series, as well as the 'Second World Championships', are already in production and will provisionally be recorded in July 2000.

NEW MAGAZINE FOR ROBOT WARS

The brand new 'Robot Wars Magazine' is set to be published in March and there will be special discount subscriptions for
Club Members Only.
See separate sheet for details

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enjoy what we do makes all the hard work and effort worthwhile. The 'Fourth Wars' are almost upon us, with application forms flooding in and plans for a live event - perhaps even a road show - close to completion. The year 2000 promises to be the best yet for 'Robot Wars' and I for one am proud to have played my part in the sport's phenomenal growth as I'm sure you are too.

Happy roboteering!

Bill Hobbins
(Producer, 'Third Wars')

THE HOUSE ROBOTS

Let's face it, the 'House Robots' receive their fair share of punishment. They were on their last legs - sorry wheels - at the end of the last series and were repaired, rebuilt and generally improved for the 'Third Wars'. Just to let you know what the competitors were up against here are a few facts and figures.

SERGEANT BASH

After the second series 'Bash' was transferred back to his unit for a thorough service and re-armament. His flame-thrower was re-configured to mix the gas and air before ignition leading to improved combustion and larger flames. He was also kitted out with hydraulic cutting snippers (20 ton cutting force) and given new and improved tyres, filled with solid foam to prevent punctures and to improve mobility.

SHUNT

'Shunt' was happy with the way he looked but was not pleased with the staying power of his pneumatically driven axe. Always the vain one, he stormed out of the arena after the 'Second Wars', threw a strop and refused to appear on the show again until he was furnished with a new axe. Engineers and designers from all over the country put their heads together to find a metal strong enough to withstand the heat of battle but light enough to keep 'Shunt' from complaining. After months of exhausting research the boffins at Robot Wars HQ hit upon the idea of

using aircraft grade aluminium with properties similar to that of titanium. And with new linkage accentuating the force of the axe, 'Shunt' well and truly battle ready!

DEAD METAL

'Dead Metal' retired from the arena battle weary and exhausted. A complete overhaul was necessary before he was in a fit state to face the improved robots of the latest series. Demanding only the best equipment, 'Dead Metal' - or DM as he's known to his friends - was fitted with the largest hand-held 'STIHL' cutting disc available, which uses a friction cutting blade as used on building sites to cut RSJs ... and boy did the sparks fly. Under his instruction, his drive wheels were individually re-housed with their own chain and motor assemblies which can now drop out for easy access in a design similar to that used by Porsche cars. After all, only the best for Dead Metal.

SIR KILLALOT

Belligerent and cocky as ever 'Sir Killalot' rested on his laurels during the break - we were too scared to ask him to get off his big backside! However behind the scenes a select team of engineers were creating his now infamous drilling arm, powerful enough to spin a car. They also swapped to Vantex speed controllers - although this proved problematic and resulted in overheating on more than one occasion. Have you ever been hot under the collar? Not pleasant is it. After a bit of fine tuning, he took to the

stage to reap havoc and destruction, until meeting 'Robopig' and getting fingers burnt...but he'd rather forget about that little encounter!

Who knows what innovation and destruction the 'Fourth Wars' will see? Whatever lies ahead, just remember one thing...be afraid...be very afraid.

MATILDA

Poor 'Matilda' felt a little roughed up around the tusks after the 'Second Wars'. So off she rolled to her exclusive health farm for some good old fashioned R&R. Clean living and a few lengthy sessions in the gym saw 'Matilda' return to the Robot Wars arena with stronger and faster tusks, pneumatically powered using carbon dioxide. Disrobed several times in the 'Third Wars', she is determined to give her dressmaker a piece of her mind!

SHOP TILL YOU DROP

A whole range of official merchandise is to be released over the next year, including posters, stationery and calendars. It is also rumoured that there will be a collection of radio-controlled toys and construction kits based on the 'House Robots' and some of the well known robotic stars of the show. There are also plans for a series of video games. First to hit the shops - hopefully this side of Christmas - will be Gameboy, PC and Playstation titles.

On a slightly different note, we're also pleased to announce the opening of a 'Robot Wars' shop in Central London. Details of where to find this emporium of all things robotic will shortly be announced on our website. And by the way, if you'd like to work behind the counter, just let us know because we need some decidedly human staff...

THE MOST DANGEROUS SHOW ON TELEVISION

If you've visited the website in recent months, you may well have heard that there was a serious accident during the recording of the current series. Regrettably a competitor's robot, which was thought to be in a safe an inactive condition, malfunctioned and severely injured a member of the crew's foot. You'll be pleased to hear that the individual concerned is well on his way to making a full recovery and would like to pass on his thanks to everyone who has wished him well.

This only goes to prove that even in a professional, working environment, accidents can happen and that 'Robot Wars' is a very dangerous sport. Please take great care if you are designing, building and testing robots at home, always make sure a responsible adult is involved, and please contact us first before starting work on your mechanised warrior.

REFBOT

Rumours from Robot Wars HQ suggest that there are plans on the drawing board for a sixth 'House Robot'. Our sources indicate that this new machine, scheduled to make his first appearance during the next series, has been designed around a standard 'Refbot' model and as such will not be engaged in combat. Given some of the decisions being made by the show's judges, a robotic referee is certainly something to look forward to...

E-MAIL BULLETINS

We would like to apologise unreservedly for the unacceptable delay with this newsletter. In the future we plan to distribute a regular monthly e-mail 'bulletin'. If you'd like to join the mailing list for this round up of news and gossip, please visit the 'Robot Wars' website (www.robotwars.co.uk) We are currently looking for an editor of this particular service, so please contact us if you are interested in being more actively involved. The ideal candidate will be over eighteen, internet proficient, based in London and have some journalistic experience.

'The Robot Wars Club' currently has a staggering 24800 members.

FACTS AND FIGURES

It takes a production crew of over 200 people to make a series of 'Robot Wars'.

It took only ten days to record eighteen episodes of 'Robot Wars', the first 'World Championships' - soon to be released on video - and an international 'league' special which has already been seen in Australia and Belgium.

We used a staggering 385 tapes, each lasting 90 minutes to record the 'Third Wars'. That's 34,650 minutes of footage in all.

The most popular item of official 'Robot Wars' merchandise is the poster of 'Sir Killalot'.

The post-production for one programme takes three weeks and to meet transmission deadlines, three edit suites are manned seven days a week, twenty four hours a day.

WARS ON THE WEB

The threads on the official Robot Wars website are many and varied. Competitors and fans use the site to voice opinions about the show as well as to help each other with the intricacies of building a robot and it's not just visited by people from this country either! Here's a taster...

ROBOT WARS: TV Shows:
3rd Series not good as 1 and 2

BY BMB on Friday, January 3, 2000 - 07:16 pm

I am not enjoying this series nearly as much as the other 2. What happened to the first round etc. The heats are all the same and the different games in between do not nearly make up for the loss of all the first and second rounds of the last series.

BY Ramon van der Hilst
Ramonvdh on Friday, January 28, 2000 - 08:18 pm
What are you talking about!!!!!!
Haven't you seen Hypno-Disc ?!!!

BY Marc on Thursday, February 3, 200 - 03:08 pm

I disagree. The show is about robot wars, not robot driving. The gauntlet had no real violence compared to the 1-2-1 battles. I think that there should be longer battles, no pit and fight to the death or immobilisation. Edit out dull parts, especially during the final battle. This way you could see how good each robot is at battle. The competitor robots should not be allowed in if they cannot do any real damage, or are too slow.

ROBOT WARS: TV Shows:
Do they have Robot Wars show over in US?

BY chris on Wednesday, February 2, 2000 - 06:41 pm:

I know they have an annual tournament, but is there a show with all the heats like there is in the UK? And what are peoples thoughts about a World Championship or something

BY Matthew (The Hex Team)
(Matthew) on Thursday, February 3, 2000 - 05:49pm:

Yes - the UK show was derived from the US show, and I think the formats the same.

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WARS ON THE WEB

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(Matthew) on Thursday , February 3, 2000 - 05:49pm:

Oh and I think that a world championship is a cracking idea - but it should be organised by the roboteers. What does anyone else think of this ?

BY Tom Gutteridge on Thursday, February 3, 2000 - 06:49pm:

The first Robot Wars World Championship was held last November in London. Teams from 10 countries took part, including America. It's about to be released as a video by Universal (UK). Robot Wars Club members get a chance to buy an advance copy on-line from the last week of the month

TV Shows : Show times in Dallas ???

BY Amanda on Monday, January 31, 2000 - 10:30pm:

I'd never even heard of Robot Wars until they showed the marathon on Superbowl Sunday in Dallas. Now I am absolutely HOOKED!!!! Does anyone know if it comes on regularly in Dallas, or was that just a tease ? And Phillipa gets her fair share of attention too...

TV Shows: Ms Forrester

BY cheeky nick caroll on Monday, January 31, 2000 - 01:51am:

- 1) Is she within the weight limits ?
- 2) Does she wear the same gear for the whole recording ?
- 3) Any photos demonstrating chassis and formidable armoury appreciated.
- 4) What's saddest, watching the robots or her ?

BY Harold on Tuesday, February 1, 2000 - 12:51am:

We love her in Fort Worth/Dallas, Texas

Why don't you tell us what you think about the show...or Phillipa ! Just visit the Bulletin board at WWW.ROBOTWARS.CO.UK



KILLALOT'S PRESS CUTTINGS

Believe it or not, Sir Killalot's a very well read robot. He scours the daily papers for robotic headlines and keeps a dainty little scrap book full of press cuttings. Here's a recent handful...

"Meanwhile, Robot Wars, thrashing TFI Friday's Chris Evans, and about to air on America's PBS channel, is being awarded its own BBC monthly magazine with Sir Killalot, the house robot, as pin-up. As a top children's programme, it's ripe for a transfer to BBC1 in the footsteps of Changing Rooms and Ground Force. Except that's no way to treat a cult."

Maggie Brown, The Guardian (31 January 2000)

"I've designed other robots over the years, including things for Doctor Who and radio controlled penguins for children's drama, but it's not just robots - I've made everything from comedy breasts for Russ Abbot and gunge machines for Noel's House Party to a codpiece with an arrow sticking through it for Blackadder...at the age of nine, I worked out how to make gunpowder and took a number of gunpowder jars to school. They were confiscated before any harm was done."

Chris Reynolds, BBC Visual Effects Supervisor of the House Robots, Radio Times (27 November 1999)

"The longer show means extra robots, extra events and added pitside interviews, which usually provide much mirth as the hapless competitors watch their pride and joys being smashed to smithereens. Strangely compelling."

Dominic Smith,

Heat Magazine (2 December 1999)

"Those lucky Brits have enjoyed the festival of metal carnage called 'Robot Wars' for years. In the televised series, everyone from high-schoolers to corporate sponsored engineers builds robots that duel with weapons like shovels and saw blades until only one survives. (Corrosives and explosives are illegal.) It's one of the UK's most popular shows. And now it's making its stateside debut."

Newsweek - American publication (January 2000)

Robot Wars Web

Another year, another war and the official web site continues growing from strength to strength. Now peaking at over 4 million hits a month and with over 6,000 people visiting the site every day <http://www.robotwars.co.uk/> is the essential place to start your surfing. February sees a major upgrade of the site with video, more info and a monthly e-mail news service.

Coupled with an extensive list of the UK robot warriors home web sites, it makes a good jumping off point for information and research on building your own entry. With details about the show format and upcoming news, the site is also home to the official discussion board. There are always threads running on the current shows and background information. Plenty of competitors are regular contributors along with members of the production team.

Normally the first place to read about news of the next events and to listen in to some of the boasts of the next generation of robots. With over 7,000 posts on the board you can gather how busy it can be.

Even more so when a particularly close decision has been made on the show or a favourite has ignominiously crashed into the dreaded 'Pit of Oblivion'. The chat room is also a popular place after a show has been on the TV, and it's here that you can find out more about the failures or success of robots on the show with builders and fans swapping theories and excuses at equal rates.

Over the next couple of months, the website is undergoing a further facelift and will soon include unseen footage from previous wars, trails of the soon to be released 'World Championships' and more archive photography than ever before.